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## EXCAVATIONS AT THEBES

WE are told that this is the age of specialization, and not to be behind the times we have introduced it into our digging at Thebes—and it has paid. Two seasons ago we found the models of Menkhetre and decided to specialize on the XI dynasty cemeteries of ancient Thebes.

then were buried within two short miles of desert. Naturally each generation had to evict its predecessors from their “eternal abodes” and therefore specializing in any one period must be taken somewhat loosely. Our by-products in the way of antiquities left by later trespassers in the XI dynasty



FIG. 1. SITE OF UNFINISHED TOMB TEMPLE OF SANKHKARE MENTUHOTEP V, LOOKING UP THE PARTLY GRADED FORECOURT

The following year this led us to the tombs of Queen Aashaït and the little Princess Maït. Sticking to the same scheme this past season, we have been rewarded with the private letters of a garrulous old farmer-priest, which have taken us right up the back stairs of a household of four thousand years ago and let us eavesdrop on domestic squabbles of the days of Abraham.

It is hard for a New Yorker, with scarcely three centuries between him and the prehistoric period of Manhattan Island, to conceive of a city with two thousand years of continuous history. In Thebes countless generations lived and died, and

tombs, often outnumber those we are looking for, but nevertheless this methodical searching after the early necropolis has given a continuity to our work which adds enormously to the zest with which we do it. The cemeteries of the Mentuhotep kings and their courtiers are quite easy to recognize, even after all sorts of renovations, and now that we have started on them we realize that the very obviousness of many of these tombs has led most diggers to pass them by.

First, to report progress on the task that we have chosen. The reader of the BULLETIN may recall the account of last

year's excavations and the description of the partly graded site for the tomb-temple of a king of the XI dynasty.<sup>1</sup> This we have now cleared completely, right up to the point where the ancient engineers abandoned their unfinished task at the death of their royal master. Fig. 1 shows the hillside which was to have been entirely cut away for the grading of the spacious forecourt in front of the temple. The smooth white area on the right shows how far they had progressed in their leveling,



FIG. 2. DAGGER  
HANDLE, EARLY  
XVIII DYN.

and the dark shadows at the base of the hill on the left mark the face of their four-thousand-year-old excavation into the rock.

Before leaving this phase of our work there is one point of historical interest worth mentioning. In last year's report we stated briefly our reasons for supposing that it was the last king of the XI dynasty who had started this temple and been buried, presumably, in its unfinished tomb. Now the last king of the XI dynasty seems to have been Sankhkare Mentuhotep V and we believe that this year we have obtained possession of more definite evi-

dence that he was actually the builder and that our hypothesis was correct.

High up among the cliffs, half-way between this unfinished temple and that of Mentuhotep III at Deir el Bahri, there is a rocky crag beside a dizzily winding path. On the face of this crag there are scratched and scribbled a confusing medley of names and signatures.<sup>2</sup> It is just like some schoolroom desk or some temptingly white-barked birch tree. Once there is an initial cut into it, every boy who owns a penknife has an irresistible impulse to add his. In this case, however, it was the XI and XII dynasty priests who left their scrawls, and nearly every one of them mentions that he served the tombs of Mentuhotep III or Mentuhotep V. The association of the priests of these two kings can not be a mere coincidence. Surely, if they forgathered here it was because the two tombs that they were guarding were not far away, and as there is no question but that Mentuhotep III's temple was at Deir el Bahri nearby, it is reasonable to suppose that Mentuhotep V's was the equally nearby royal tomb in the unfinished temple.

Last year we opened some of the grave pits of the later generations, who were tempted by the ease with which they could dig in the flat, graded platform and by the seclusion of the spot. This past winter we have found a dozen more of these pits which would have amply repaid our troubles if only the ubiquitous ancient robbers had not been so forehanded. In one pit we found the two arms wrenched from a mummy, with the skin still showing the imprints of eight large bracelets of gold and semi-precious stones. Everywhere we found those curiously decorated mummy cases that the Arab workmen call *rishi* from the feather patterns painted on them (fig. 3). One of the pits was the tomb of a warrior named Ahmose Penhat, son of Ahotep, as we learned from bits of his mummy cloth written all over with magic texts. King Thothmes I, who reigned between 1540 and 1501 B. C., had presented to him a dagger (fig. 2). He had

<sup>1</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, BULLETIN, Nov., 1921, Part II, pp. 29-34, with map and photographs.

<sup>2</sup>Recently published by Spiegelberg, Graffiti aus der Thebanischen Nekropolis, Nos. 920-987.

a compound bow, made up of layers of horn and wood for greater strength somewhat the way a carriage spring is made up of layers of steel, and a leather bowman's wristlet. We found bits of his ebony arm-chair inlaid with ivory, his table—in fact, it was hard to tell how much there had been before the ancient robbers had amused themselves by hurling rocks at whatever had seemed not worth carrying away. Another pit had been—for a short while—the last resting place of a number of women whose false tresses and transformations were carefully wrapped up in linen cloths against the day when they would want to tie them in among their own scant locks to look their best at some ghostly function in the next world (fig. 4). Luckily the blue faience pot-stands and pillow in another tomb had not been completely pulverized in this wanton game of destruction, and when we had gathered up the bits from the burial chamber and from the surface for yards around the mouth of the tomb, we found that we had a very handsome collection of the ceramic art of the early XVIII dynasty (fig. 5).

With the possibilities of the Mentuhotep V cemetery exhausted so far as we could see, last New Year's Day we returned to Deir el Bahri and the temple and cemetery of Mentuhotep III. Day by day, our work seemed to have few ups and many downs. Our gang grew to over four hundred men and boys, the railway to our dump lengthened out to a quarter of a mile, and the mere effort of keeping our few cars moving so that the work should never stop took up all of our energies (figs. 6-7). In the bustle and rush of the work, laying of new rails or taking on more men loomed larger at the time than exciting discoveries, but now that we can look back on the results of it all in a more detached way, we can see an ample reward.

The Temple of Mentuhotep III at Deir el Bahri is built right under a towering limestone cliff (from which Burton took the photograph in figure 8), on a platform which is fashioned in the living rock. As one stood in the ancient temple doorway at the top of the sloping ramp, there stretched in front an enormous open court-

yard, over two hundred yards long and one hundred yards wide, surrounded by a high limestone wall. On the far side of the courtyard there was a gateway through which one entered from an avenue, lined on either side with statues of the king, tamarisk trees, and two more high stone walls. Toward the front of the court, and partly under the old house built by the

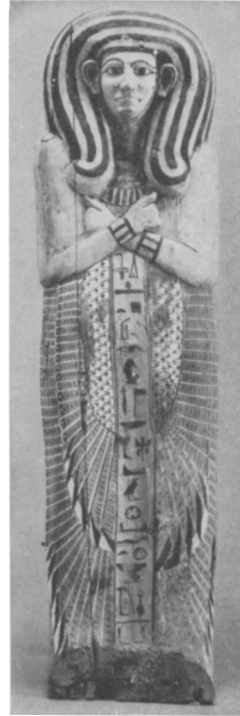


FIG. 3. COFFIN LID  
EARLY XVIII DYN.

Egypt Exploration Fund, was the mouth of a gigantic tomb called the Bab el Hosân by the Arabs, found by Howard Carter in 1900. The temple itself was discovered and cleared by Naville and Hall for the Egypt Exploration Fund, between 1903 and 1907. At the same time the parts of the court immediately adjacent to the temple had been cleared of the deep rubbish to within a foot or two of the ancient surface, but this latter had not been examined by our predecessors on the site. The outlines of the court and of the avenue have

always been visible except where they were covered by Naville's dump at the south-east corner.

Our object was to clear the southern

at that time a wall of rough field stone was built along the southern side. Then the plan was changed; the eastern part of the court was filled a yard deeper over the orig-



FIG. 4. PACKAGES OF FALSE HAIR. EARLY XVIII DYN.

half of the court from front to back to discover whether there was a pendant tomb to the Babel Hosân and whether there were any other tombs outside of the southern wall. We found that there was neither the

inal grading, and a well-built stone wall was erected, starting out in a curve from the temple end—a most unusual scheme in Egyptian architecture. Up to this point the court had been oriented directly toward



FIG. 5. ARTICLES OF FAIENCE. EARLY XVIII DYN.

one nor the other. But there was a condition of affairs which can not fail to interest the student of the temple's history and plan.

To our surprise the front of the courtyard was not the rock leveled off—it turned out to be a hollow filled some fifteen feet deep with rock and sand. Originally it had been intended to fill this hollow less deeply, and

Karnak in the heart of Thebes across the river, but as the avenue thus projected ran into hills near the cultivation, a complete change was made, pointing the court and the avenue in a more southeasterly direction on the lines which we now see. The curved wall was thereupon demolished—it may have been built only a few courses



FIG. 6. CLEARING AWAY A GREAT MOUND OVER THE SOUTHERN  
TEMPLE WALLS AT DEIR EL BAHRI

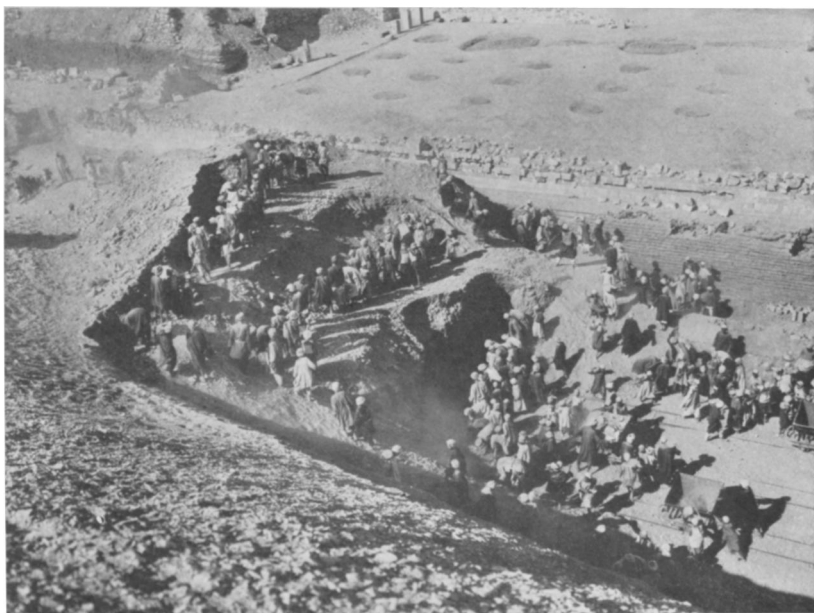


FIG. 7. HALF OF THE GANG WHEN IT WAS AT ITS LARGEST

high—and the existing stone walls were built with brick outer walls beyond them. The Bab el Hosân was now dug and the building of the temple started.

circular pits thirty feet deep (fig. 9). The men were wild with excitement because one of the local workmen said that these pits were just like the Bab el Gûsus in which

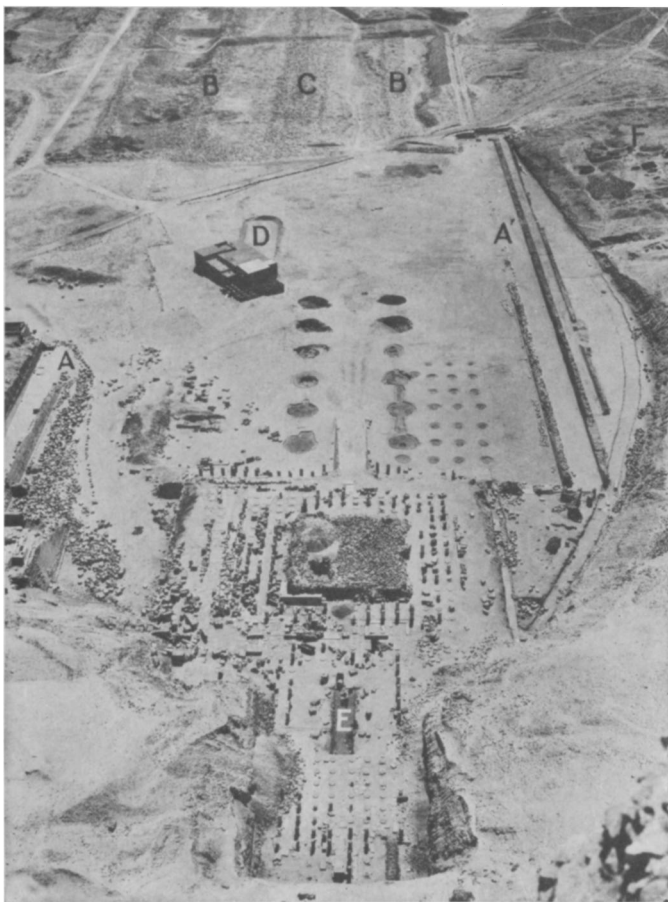


FIG. 8. BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE MENTUHOTEP III TEMPLE FROM THE DEIR EL BAHRI CLIFFS

A-A', STONE WALLS OF THE COURT. B-B', TRACES OF THE STONE WALLS OF THE AVENUE. C, TRACES OF THE AVENUE. D, MOUTH OF THE TOMB CALLED THE BAB EL HOSÂN. E, MOUTH OF THE TOMB OF MENTUHOTEP III. F, XII DYNASTY CEMETERY

These three changes of plan in the courtyard were enough to get us into a thoroughly puzzled state, but still more was yet to come.

In the front part of the courtyard we dug parallel trenches to bed rock. In the latter we began to strike the mouths of enormous

Daressy had found hundreds of untouched burials years ago. We, ourselves, were skeptical because we did not like the circular plan and curious funneling shape. In fact we thought they were tree holes, because as we found them one after another they formed a double row leading directly

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to the temple ramp. The only difficulty was that they were filled with rocks instead of earth in which a tree could grow.

plan, at right angles to the curved walls, and the gateway is where the center of the court would be if that second plan had been



FIG. 9. CLEARING THE MOUTH OF A TREE-PIT

Eventually, as our gangs drew nearer the temple, one pair of holes turned out to be filled with soil and in it we could see tree roots. Gradually it dawned on us what

carried out. This point was not taken into consideration when the rows of trees were planned, and it was only after the holes had been dug that it was noticed that at



FIG. 10. PLOT IN WHICH A SYCAMORE FIG TREE HAD BEEN PLANTED, STATUE OF THE KING WHICH HAD STOOD IN ITS SHADE, AND A MUD ALTAR

had happened. The avenue had been laid out across the court, parallel to the existing stone walls which belonged to the third plan. But the front wall of the court remains to this day on the line of the second

the far end they led to a blank wall. A fourth change of plan was now made to correct somebody's blunder. Ten holes in each row were filled with rock and covered over and only the four nearest the temple



in each row were planted with sycamore fig trees.<sup>3</sup> These were so far from the gateway that the architects judged that no one would notice that they were out of alignment with it. As a semi-poetic touch, under each tree they placed a sandstone statue of the king standing in its welcome shade—we found the broken statues lying beside each one and the holes in the mud where they had stood—and in one case some pious

our whole conception of the temple. The colonnade was two stories high but it was intended to mask the whole first story with an oasis of green in the rugged bareness of the desert cliffs. And even yet the interest in the whole scheme was by no means exhausted, for just at this time the workmen clearing away one of Naville's old dumps (figs. 6–7) turned up in it two pieces of sandstone faintly marked with



FIG. 11. PLOTS FOR TAMARISK TREES IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE PORTICO. XI DYN.

person had made a little altar of earth by the tree trunk (fig. 10).

Just at this time we began to find circular tree plots in front of the southern colonnade of the temple and as time went on we had cleared three rows of seven plots each, filled with soil and planted with tamarisks (fig. 11). Unquestionably when we excavate the other side of the court next year we shall find a corresponding grove opposite the northern colonnade.

This was interesting enough. It changed

red lines (fig 13). They were clearly pieces of a floor slab from the temple, and judging from the part of the dump in which we found them, they came originally from the ambulatory on the upper level.

A little consideration convinced us that here we had the actual plan—or perhaps better, project—for laying out the trees which we had just found. First, we must remember that drawings to scale were practically unknown to the ancient Egyptians, who were careless even of proportions. We need not be surprised to find, therefore, that the square temple platform and the ramp leading to it are represented by a mere symbol laid out on the center line. The

<sup>3</sup>The identification of all of the botanical specimens from the excavations was very generously made by T. W. Brown, of the Horticultural Section, Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture.

most interesting point to notice is that the later extension of the temple (around the tomb E, in fig. 8) is not drawn and may

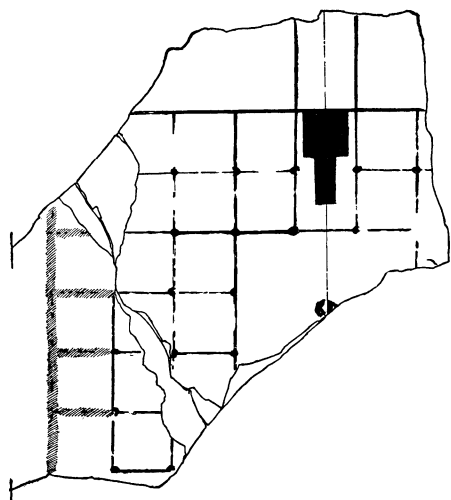


FIG. 12. PROJECTED TEMPLE GROVE

not have existed when this plan was made (figs. 12 and 14). To right and left dots are laid out at the intersections of ruled lines.



FIG. 13. PART OF THE ARCHITECT'S PROJECT FOR THE TEMPLE GARDEN

To the left we find three long rows of seven dots each—the tamarisk grove already excavated—but a closer examination of the stone shows a fourth row erased. Now it is an important fact that the left, or southern portico is shorter than the right, and it

is easy to see what has happened. The old landscape architect has paced off the length of the right-hand portico and found that he could work in four rows of trees. Then he has gone up into the temple, and squatting down on the floor, has laid out a symmetrical design with four rows on both sides, which has stood until some more ob-

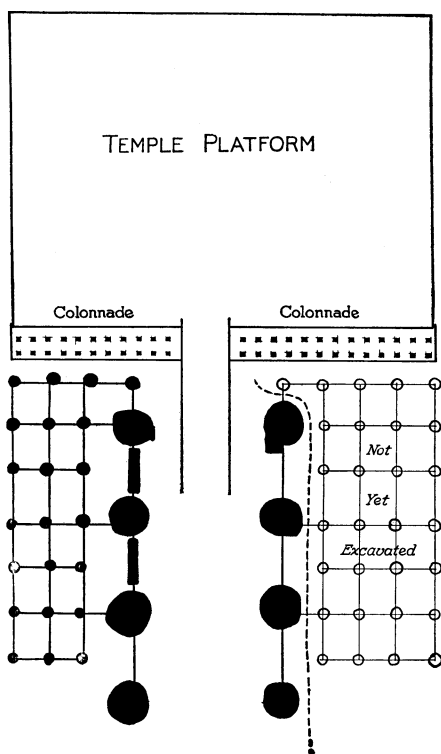


FIG. 14. TEMPLE GROVE AS FOUND

servant colleague has pointed out his mistake in supposing that both colonnades were the same width, and he has scratched out his fourth row on the left. Close to the temple, trees are marked which do not exactly agree in disposition with the finished lay-out, and the circular feature in front of the ramp we searched for in vain. In short, this plan must be taken as a mere project which was altered when it was transferred to papyrus or a tablet, but it is none the less interesting for that.

So much for the way the landscape architect went about his job. We next discov-

ered the way the gardener planted the trees. The holes dug in the rock to the needless depth of about thirty feet have already been mentioned. Those in which trees were to be planted were filled with black soil sufficiently lightened with river sand. In this earth, lying horizontally and quite close together about five or six inches below the surface, we noticed round poles three inches in diameter and six feet long. These poles were readily identified as sycamore fig branches, but their presence there was very



FIG. 15. SPROUTS FROM A SYCAMORE FIG CUTTING

puzzling until we came to clear one of them of the surrounding mud. The miraculous dryness of the Egyptian desert had preserved the explanation for four thousand years and we were able to photograph shoots and roots sprouting from every knot (fig. 15). In other words, these poles were nothing more nor less than a gardener's cuttings of unusual size and crowded close together to give quick results and a thick clump of green. For a short time they had been a great success, and then the caretakers of the temple had neglected to water them; the young trees had parched and dried, and the axe marks of the wood choppers still showed how they had been cleared away.

The unexpected was coming thick and fast just at that time. We had given up all idea that there were any foundation deposits at the temple, taking it for granted that if they had ever existed our predecessors on the site would have run across them. Luckily for us, though, they had missed

them by a matter of inches, and we added to our collections something of prime importance to the puzzling history of the site.

Four men had been ordered to clear out the sand which had drifted, since Naville's day, into the trench in the rock prepared for the foundation of the revetment wall of the temple platform. We only wanted to clear it enough to replan it, and the four men seemed to have done enough and were just about to move on when their hoes went into a square hole at the turning of the trench (fig. 16), and the first thing they brought out was a broken mud brick from which had fallen a bronze tablet. Mr. Mace's corner-stone deposit of the Lisht Pyramid immediately came to my mind.<sup>4</sup> The men's never-failing hope, as usual, was of a pit of gold and a fabulous bonus and they refused to have it blighted by my doubts until a happy idea struck me and off I ran to the other three corners of the temple with the head man in tow. If they were finding a deposit under one corner of the temple why not under all four and thus four bonuses? The walls over the other corners turned out to be practically intact and the magnificent hopes of the pit were not very reluctantly given up for the sure thing of four deposits. And for those of us in charge of the work a most delightful type of digging began. We went for those deposits only when it was convenient. They were perfectly safe under the massive walls, and when we had nothing else to do we cut a little tunnel, cleared a deposit, photographed it, and brought it home (fig. 17).

In Egypt the laying of a corner-stone was even more of an event than it is today when a masonic temple is being built. At each of the four corners of the foundation trench a hole some three feet square was dug. On the appointed day—with the king present in person, in all probability—the priests approached one corner of the temple and placed in the hole the head, a leg, and a rib of a freshly slaughtered ox. Beside it they laid some conical loaves of bread, some little saucers filled with barley, figs, grapes, jujubes, and little round cakes, and half a dozen miniature wine jars (fig. 19). All this was doubtless accompanied by prayers

<sup>4</sup> BULLETIN, Nov. 1921, Part II, p. 16.

that the king, who would one day be buried in the temple, should never feel the pangs of hunger or of thirst. Then the masons filled the hole with gravel and sand and brought out some fresh clay and a brick mould, and moulded upon the spot four bricks—the first plain brick, the second with a tablet of bronze in it, the third with a tablet of alabaster, and the fourth with a tablet of wood. Thus they represented the

they moved on to the next, one of them took a short cut and carelessly stepped and slipped on one of the soft, wet bricks which had just been laid so ceremoniously. It was his footprint that told us the tale.

While we are on the subject of foundation deposits, it is worth noting that we found one of those laid five hundred years after Mentuhotep III by Queen Hatshepsut for the southeast corner of her great temple



FIG. 16. TRENCH FOR THE FOUNDATION OF THE SOUTH TEMPLE WALL WITH THE HOLE FOR THE CORNER-STONE DEPOSIT

four materials of which the temple was built—brick, metal, stone, and wood, and on each tablet was carved the name of the founder: King Nebhepetre Mentuhotep III (fig. 18).

Then they passed to the next hole, and so on around to the southwest corner, and as the brickmakers had a little mud left over after making the four sets of bricks, they dumped it in the hole, for their job was over. They may have been a very devout party—these old priests of four thousand years ago—but they were not very orderly, for at the northeast corner, as

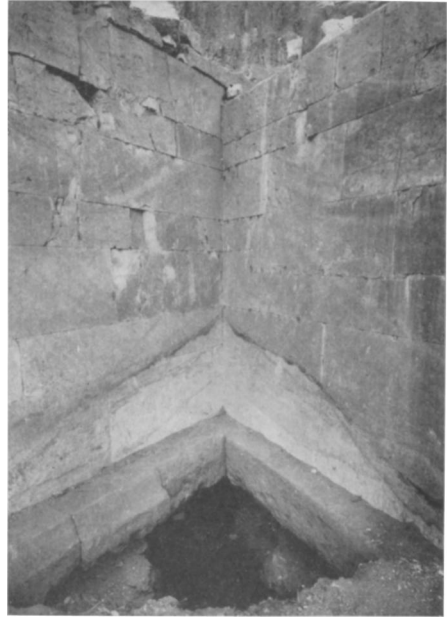


FIG. 17. NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE TEMPLE WITH OUR TUNNEL TO THE DEPOSIT

at Deir el Bahri. There was the same food—and in addition a quail, some dates, and a tray of fig branches full of bundles of celery—but instead of the four symbolical bricks to represent the materials of which a temple was built, there were models of the builders' tools. There was the carpenters' axe, adze, mallet, plain chisel and mortising chisel; the smelters' crucible; the brickmakers' mould; the wooden pick for digging the foundations, and rush sieves for sand (fig. 20).

Returning to Mentuhotep III and his temple we found there, too, a curious relic

of the builders. Just outside of the southern courtyard walls the men turned up over forty immense rope baskets full of stone chip. There is no doubt that they are of

an old one that has seen service, for it has been soaked in the red paint which they used to snap on a piece of work they were lining up (fig. 21).



FIG. 18. THREE OF THE BRICKS WHITTLED AWAY TO SHOW THE TABLETS. XI DYN.

the XI dynasty, for one of Mentuhotep's walls goes right over them. There they stand lined up in rows as the workmen left them. Some change in plan was made. Dirt was dumped on top of them, the wall

Once the Temple of Mentuhotep III was built at Deir el Bahri, the surrounding district became one of the holy places of the necropolis of Thebes.

On a spur of the hill overlooking the



FIG. 19. FOOD IN A CORNER-STONE DEPOSIT. XI DYN.

was built on top of that, and thus they remained forgotten (fig. 22). An XI dynasty mason's cord-reel from one of the nearby tombs is another interesting relic of the builders of those days. It consists of a wooden handle and shaft with a split reed revolving loosely on it. The cord is

southeastern corner of the courtyard there was a little cemetery of scarcely a score of graves where in the late XII dynasty certain worthies, possibly all members of one family, found their last resting place. Several of the men were employed in the treasury department—"wearers of the

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royal seal"—or held minor offices at the court; one was a son of a vizier and the most important was "Chief of the Prophets in Karnak" in the days of Amenemhat III.

And then there were stelae in wood and in limestone, put up in memory of the lesser personages, of which we brought home good examples (fig. 23). Archaeologically the



FIG. 20. MODELS OF TOOLS FROM A FOUNDATION DEPOSIT OF QUEEN HATSHEPSUT. XVIII DYN.

On the whole they were respectable, prosperous Theban burghers. The Chief Prophet Senwosretankh built himself a brick tomb chapel overlooking the temple court with a forehall whose ceiling was once supported by painted wooden columns exactly like those in the model of the house of

most important information derived from this cemetery was information which permits us to date a certain class of black, rectangular coffins to the late XII dynasty.

In the XVIII dynasty Deir el Bahri was peculiarly sacred to the Goddess Hathor and a shrine was built in the Mentuhotep



FIG. 21. A MASON'S CORD AND REEL. XI DYN.

Mehenkwtetre. Another worthy, Amenemhât, had a similar chapel with painted limestone shrines let into the walls to shelter statues of himself and his wife. We found them broken to pieces, for the temptation to drop them down deep pits to see them smash had been too great for later vandals.

Temple where Naville found the famous cow. She was the miraculous madonna of ancient Thebes. Daily the devotees flocked to her chapel to beg for her favors, and on the way they bought from a hawker at some roadside booth a string of beads or a little pottery cow to offer with their prayers,

and others carried a blue faience platter of fruit or flowers (fig. 25). It was a very little shrine and the priests had to clear it out from time to time to make room for this never-ending stream of offerings. The old and broken ones they gathered up and carried half-way across the courtyard of Mentuhotep's temple to the side doors that opened north and south, and just outside they dumped them. All over the hillside south of the courtyard we found the most



FIG. 22. WORKMEN'S BASKETS FROM THE BUILDING OF THE MENTUHOTEP TEMPLE

astounding assortment of rubbish brought out from the chapel—including even a fish-net (fig. 26).

By the XXV dynasty a great dune of drift sand had covered the now destroyed walls on the south of the courtyard, and in it were scooped the simple graves of the Theban poor, who were in pathetic contrast with the great nobles buried around them. Rarely could they afford even a rough coffin, so their families merely bundled them up in old rags and carried them up to the desert cemetery. An Arab peasant funeral of today gives us the picture, probably, except that no wooden bier was used to bear the body and therefore, to make

it rigid enough to be borne on the shoulders of the mourners, it was trussed up with palm sticks and the arms and feet were tied together before it was wrapped in its grave clothes. The Coptic Christians later did the same, and as far away as Persia, today they still prepare a corpse by tying its big toes together.

No offerings were left with these humble dead except a garland of leaves with one small child, and in the sand, not far from another, there was a miniature basket full of an odd lot of beads (fig. 24).

A nearby XI dynasty tomb was appropriated by the somewhat more prosperous people of this late period. A brick chapel was built for them in the tomb court with a palm tree planted in front, and in the tomb itself and in little chambers cut in the chapel floor they were laid away in mummy-shaped coffins (fig. 27). Four painted wooden stelae of a family of priests and priestesses of Amon, who were also officials of the Vicereine of Thebes, lay near the chapel doorway. On the one side the dead are shown as the God Anubis introduces them to the God Harmakhis in the world to come. On the other, they sit beneath a tree while the Goddess Nut pours cooling drinks out to them with either hand (fig. 28).

The entire southern half of the Mentuhotep area at Deir el Bahri was finished as far as we could see, and rather than begin on the northern half last year we decided to leave it, with all its problems of handling a large gang and a long railway, until the coming winter. M. Lacau, the Directeur Général du Service des Antiquités, had generously made all arrangements for us to excavate the big tombs of the nobles of the reign of Mentuhotep III which look down upon Deir el Bahri from the northern cliffs. This gave us a very welcome chance, because years ago we had done the tombs to the south and if we were to continue our specializing on the XI dynasty, those to the north of Deir el Bahri should naturally be our next task.

The XI dynasty courtiers by some table of precedence—or by some devious oriental graft with the court chamberlain—were allotted spaces for their tombs on the hill-

sides overlooking the avenue which led to their sovereign's temple (fig. 30). Under the cliffs, each noble cut a wide, flat court and where the rock was unsafe he built a brick façade with a doorway in the center. Entering, one passed along a lofty corridor cut in the rock to a square chamber for a stela or a statue at the back, and there the visitor's way was arrested. But under his feet was filled in and hidden another sloping passage that led down into the bowels of the earth where the great man's mummy lay in its sarcophagus (fig. 29). Today the bats rustle in the darkness of the opened tombs; the chambers where the model boats and granaries were stored are empty, and the one sarcophagus which we found was blackened with the smoke of burnt mummies. This is as we expected. All of the more obvious places were robbed ages ago, in all probability, but the chance of another forgotten chamber like that of Mehenkwtre would justify almost any efforts, and besides, we had great hopes of finding an unpillaged tomb of some member of a courtier's family.

The tomb of Ipy, which lies just west of the tourist path to the Valley of the Kings, shows a typical arrangement (fig. 31). In the rock cutting on the east side of the sloping ramp, up which one approached from the valley below, little tombs for the family and the vassals of the great man were quarried out of the rock (fig. 32). One of them, made for a certain Hesem, we discovered intact, with remarkable results. In front of some of the other large tombs west of Ipy's, the family were buried in pits on either side of the doorway. It was in one of these pits that Maspero procured the sarcophagus and burial chamber of Horhotep which is among the treasures of the Cairo Museum. In short, we have a most promising field and already it has produced more than we could have expected.

The reader must think of archaeology in Egypt as a rather ghoulish calling, and sometimes it must be hard to understand why there is so much that is connected with death and burial in every account of digging there. At least one half of the answer is that the ancient Egyptian's tomb—his "eternal house"—was one of his chief cares

and it is only through it that we can see his earthly dwelling.

To the Egyptian the life of the world to come was always the big problem. It is really very hard for us who take the future more or less as a matter of course, to realize how ever-present a problem it was. The most popular tales turned on the sacrifices a man would make to assure himself and his family a rich turn-out with which to enter heaven. The king could give a faithful



FIG. 23. STELA OF SENEBHENAF, SON OF THE VIZIER YAÏB. LATE XII DYN.

servant no more welcome reward than a fine tomb perpetually endowed with offerings, and a man's social position might be measured by the magnificence of his coffin. The undertaker's trade was highly lucrative and, even if tradition goes that the embalmer was considered an unclean person, his work was looked upon as a veritable means to eternal life, for above all things the Egyptian feared that the dissolution of his body would leave his soul a homeless wanderer in limbo. Some strange echoes of this conviction turned up last year.



Digging in Thebes one often finds piles of pots buried in the sand, filled with rags and salt—the refuse of embalmers' shops. This last year alone we ran across three such caches of the later periods, and two years ago we found the same sort of things left over from the embalming of the body of Mehenkwetre. A little chamber had been provided for them—near the tomb because they had been in contact with the dead man's body and therefore contained some of the essence of his being, but outside of the courtyard because all that appertained to embalming was essentially impure. That chamber had been entered before our day, but this year we found the similar chamber of the tomb of Ipy just as it had been sealed up after his funeral, and some of the things in it were, so far as we know, unique.

This chamber, again, was near the tomb, but just far enough away not to pollute the precincts of Ipy's "eternal dwelling" (fig. 31). The great noble had provided for the embalming of his body most liberally. Cloths, salts, aromatic oils, sawdust, and countless pottery vessels, far beyond ordinary requirements, were laid aside against the day of his death. In addition a wooden platform 7 ft. 1 in. long and 4 ft. 2½ in. wide was prepared, with four wooden blocks of ghastly similarity to those on the dissecting tables of modern medical schools (fig. 33). On the day of his death the body of Ipy was delivered to the embalmers and stretched on the blocks upon the platform. On the four corners were symbolically laid four wooden talismans shaped like the hieroglyphic word-sign "life," and there was brought forth a curious magical instrument called the *pedet-aba*, of doubtful but unquestionably potent meaning. To the recitation of appropriate charms, the body was then anointed with oils and rubbed with salts which still stain the platform and the blocks. Then, after the embalming was completed and Ipy's mummy duly wrapped in its bandages, all that had touched it was gathered up religiously, for the possession of so much as a hair of his head by an enemy would provide the means of bewitching him. Soiled rags, broken

pots, left-over salts, the wooden "signs of life," and the *pedet-aba* were packed in sixty-seven large jars which were sealed and carried up to the little chamber by the tomb. Curiously enough we can say that it took the undertaker's men four trips to get them all up there, for only eighteen rope sling-nets were provided to carry the pots and most of them had to be taken off and carried back after each trip until the fourth and last lot was placed in the chamber with the ropes still on them. Finally came the table and the blocks, and as the former was too wide to be crammed through the narrow entrance, the embalmer's people broke it up and stuck it in on top of the jars as a mere pile of boards (fig. 34).

While we are on the subject of embalming materials it is worth while noting that in an XVIII dynasty chamber of the same sort we found pots marked in ink with their contents — "*wam*-wood sawdust," "*inset*-material," and "natron salt"—or with the names of the embalmers Hori and Monthu. In one of these jars was the rather gruesome scraper with which they had worked on the bodies they had prepared for burial.

What the skill of the embalmer could not accomplish, the learned priests might effect by their knowledge of spells and incantations. The story-tellers had circumstantial accounts of sorcerers who could make a magic crocodile of wax that would gobble up the lover of a faithless wife, or a magic wax ship and its crew that could kidnap a king and carry him to Ethiopia and back in a single night. What could be more natural, then, than to make a magic wax mummy which, if only the proper words had been recited over it, could substitute itself for a body that had been destroyed in spite of all precautions? Such a wax mummy lying in a miniature wooden coffin, complete in every detail, was made for one Sioh, son of Reniker, who lived in the days of the XI dynasty (fig. 36). The Egypt Exploration Fund found his empty pit tomb in the southern triangular court of the Mentuhotep Temple, and we found his little magic wax mummy in its coffin under a stone nearby, where some robber of long ago had dropped it as a thing of no

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value.<sup>5</sup> The archaeologist will hardly share the ancient thief's disdain, however, for he will see in the wax mummy a prototype of the countless wooden, stone, and pottery ushabtis which fill every Egyptian collection. Only by a curious twist of ideas, what in the XI dynasty was a man's own portrait, in the course of time became his servant.

Other samples of the magician's art turned up quite unexpectedly among the robbed and broken mummies in the XII and XVIII dynasty tombs. In ancient

wrap the dead in indestructible bandages. No precaution was too trivial when the Egyptian thought of the horrid catastrophe of dissolution. The books of magic con-

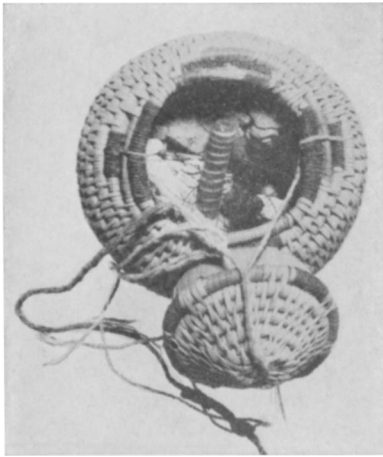


FIG. 24. TOY BASKET FULL OF BEADS. XXV DYN.

Egyptian mythology the god Horus had set the bones of his father Osiris together and had preserved them from decay. Now a man's body was put in a coffin, the planks of which were joined together with wooden pegs just as the bones of Osiris were joined together by the magic of Horus. The connection may seem a little far-fetched to us but when you are practising magic apparently no imagery can be too naive, and no chances must be lost. Therefore the coffin-maker wrote upon his pegs and his tenons before he drove them into the planks: "Joined for thee are thy bones which are in the Great Cemetery, by Horus who embraces thee" or an incantation that would compel the Children of Horus to

<sup>5</sup>Under the blocks of stone in front of the boy in Fig. 16.

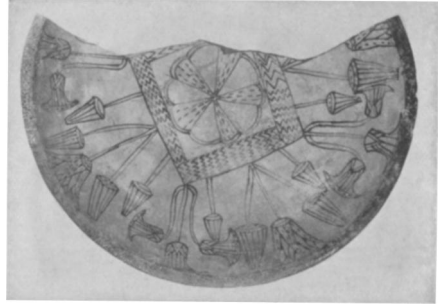


FIG. 25. BLUE FAIENCE PLATTER FROM THE HATHOR SHRINE. EARLY XVIII DYN.

tained infallible spells against it and against the enmity of demons in the world to come, and sometimes these were copied out on the skin of a mummy's arm before it was wrapped up (fig. 37). With some such idea of warding off evil the family of a little girl who died about 1000 B. C. had tied strings around her throat, elbows, wrists,

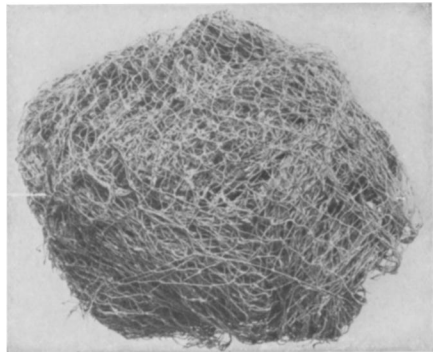


FIG. 26. FISH-NET FROM THE HATHOR SHRINE

and ankles and each string they had knotted a mystic number of times—seven, fourteen, and twenty-one.

Every care had been expended by embalmer and learned priest to prevent the body's destruction and on the day of the funeral it was carried into the tomb and laid away in its coffin. The lid of the coffin

was pegged in place, its handle was sawn off, and then the last priest, taking a broom of *beden*-grass, swept out the chamber, reciting the while a most powerful incantation which removed the footsteps of all evil spirits before the door was sealed up forever. The straws which had fallen from such a broom we found in the tomb of Wah, the henchman of Mehenkwetre, two years ago, and again this year we found them scattered over the floor of the tomb of Hesem, Ipy's follower, as the reader can see in fig. 35.

of the religious year, it was the duty of the Ka-servant to repair to the tomb and make the offerings, and as some of these feasts called for night and day attendance, there were times when the Ka-servant camped out at the tomb for several days on end. With him he might bring a sheaf of papers and accounts, to occupy his idle time between services in the more mundane side of his duties, and when he was finished with them nothing was more natural than to crumple them up and throw them away in some odd corner. Now, after four



FIG. 27. TWO UNDISTURBED MUMMIES IN ANTHROPOID COFFINS NEAR DEIR EL BAHRI. XXV DYN.

It is depressing to think how ineffectual all of this effort was and forever to dwell in the morbid atmosphere of tombs and undertakers and priests. However, every once in a while we catch the Egyptian off his guard and find him a thoroughly human creature with his own business troubles and family rows. This happened just at the end of last year. But first a few lines of explanation.

Always provident for his "Ka's," or soul's, requirements in the future life, it was the ambition of the ancient Egyptian to arrange for the perpetual performance of those services and offerings needful for his Ka's existence and repose. If he were rich enough, he appointed a "Ka-servant"—a priest learned in mortuary ceremonies who was also the manager of the estates with which he endowed his tomb. At New Year's, on the Wag Feast, the Festival of Thoth, and all the other holidays

thousand years, we come along and gather up these waste papers and suddenly meet the Theban Ka-servants when they are thinking of something far different from the religious rigamarole that the tomb pictures always make them recite.

Of these Ka-servants' scrap-baskets the first that we found was in a cranny of a little tomb next to that of Horhotep. Here there had been thrown some pieces of broken pots on which the Ka-servant had jotted down memoranda with a bit of charcoal; a scrap torn out of a papyrus scroll of hymns, on the back of which he had written an account of corn given to a dozen different people; and a second sheet with an account of wheat, barley, and dates "expended in rations for the army"—probably a tax return in which Horhotep's Ka-servant was involved as the proprietor of the tomb endowment.

A few days after these papers were found it happened that we were going over some of the left-overs from the tomb of Mehenk-wetre, which we had laid aside in the busy days when we were repairing and photographing the models two years ago. Among them there was a bundle of torn and crumpled papyri which had been buried in a hole in the causeway of Mehenk-wetre's tomb. When we came to un-

lay in these very salutations, for among them the writer invokes the gods of Memphis and Heracleopolis. Now it was probably within the lifetime of Mehenk-wetre that the royal house of Heracleopolis, reigning in Memphis over the north of Egypt, was overthrown by Mentuhotep II of Thebes at the end of a rebellion which had lasted for three generations. No Theban of those days would be invoking

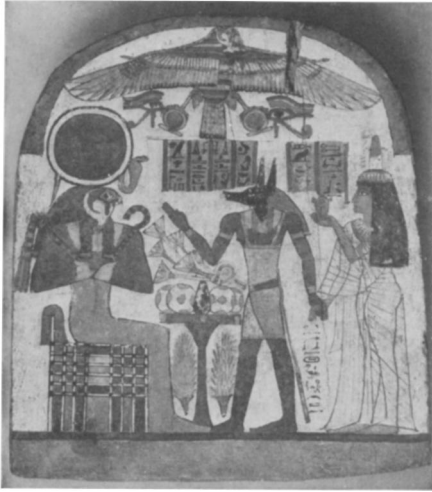


FIG. 28. FRONT AND BACK OF A PAINTED WOODEN STELA OF THE DIVINE CHANTRESS OF AMON, THENTENTISET. XXV DYN.

fold them and patch them up we found that we had parts of a most carefully drawn-up list of commodities and the heading of a "Statement of land which the Sovereign—to whom be life, safety, and health—gave to the Ka-servant Ipy." Evidently this was an endowment, made by the king for the eternal abode of his favorite Mehenk-wetre, in the form of a grant to the Ka-servant who was to administer it for the benefit of the deceased. Along with this account the Ka-servant had thrown away a letter which immediately excited our interest. It is a typical oriental letter, just such as would be written in Egypt today, in which only one third is taken up with the trivial message that is its object, and the rest is devoted to those flowery greetings which always make such an appeal in the East. But to us the value of the letter

the gods of Memphis and Heracleopolis, and therefore we concluded that this letter must have been written in the North by someone whose lifelong devotion to the local pantheon was not to be upset by mere political changes. The letter deals with matters of routine on an estate evidently belonging to the Ka-servant. Since a Theban could not have controlled Memphite estates during the rebellion, we concluded that this farm was probably among the plundered northern towns and was part of "the land which the Sovereign gave to the Ka-servant."

Within a short time we came unexpectedly on another case of the spoiling of the Memphites. That other and greater Ipy, who was buried in the big tomb by the tourist path, had evidently received as his reward for services rendered to the sov-

ereign, one estate at Dedisut in the suburbs of Memphis and another elsewhere in the North, where his Ka-servant, Hekanakht, spent half of his time.

The Hekanakht Papers are among the foremost finds from our Theban excavations. In course of time, when they have been carefully and fully published, they will undoubtedly be among the classical documents of their kind, picturing as they do Egyptian agricultural life of four thousand years ago. For the present, however, we may take them as being about the most intimate and naïve self-portrait that any

letters and memoranda. Then came the day when Hesem was to be buried. The floor of the tomb was swept out and a hole in the passage leading to the vault below was filled with whatever came handiest—which luckily included the papers.

Evidently all but one of these papyri belonged to a single batch, thrown away together. That one has come down to us as a couple of tantalizing scraps of a letter from a daughter to her mother. At the end the daughter says, "Salute Ger in life, safety, and health, and do not let him fail to write me about what has happened to



FIG. 29. SARCOPHAGUS CHAMBER OF THE TOMB OF IPY. XI DYN.

Egyptian of the day has left us. That we can appreciate them as such, is due to the fortunate circumstance that Battiscombe Gunn had come to Luxor at the conclusion of the Egypt Exploration Society's excavations at Tell el Amarna, and was able to stay with us long enough to give us a preliminary translation of them as we unrolled them. Few important finds of papyri have ever been worked out so quickly.

Again it is a question of the waste paper thrown away by a tomb priest. In this case the small tomb of Hesem had been prepared long before it was used as a place of burial, and while it stood empty the stone masons and the priest camped in it, the masons scattering over the floor their mauls and beams and leather sacks, and the priest throwing among them his old

him." The mother seems to have decided that the surest way to pass her daughter's message on to the delinquent young man was simply to readdress and forward her letter to him, and therefore she rubbed her own name off the back and wrote in its place "The Steward Ger."

Of the remaining seven documents one is a mere scrap, but there are three letters and three inventories or accounts practically complete. In fact, one letter was still folded and sealed, ready to be forwarded to the address written on the outside (fig. 38). The accounts all deal with the property of the Ka-servant Hekanakht, but the thing that puzzled us considerably at first was the fact that two of the letters were addressed "The Ka-servant Hekanakht presents this to his Household of Nebesyt," and the third—the sealed one—

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was addressed to the Overseer Ranefer from Hekanakht. The point was—how did it happen that the letters *from* Hekanakht were being received where we should expect him to be?

Our eventual explanation of the presence of the papers in the tomb briefly was this. Hekanakht in his quality of Ka-servant was proprietor of the tomb endowment left by Ipy, including the estates in the North. From time to time it was needful

on one occasion and therefore he set his affairs thoroughly in order before he left, and appointed his eldest son Mersu manager of his business at home and his substitute as Ka-servant during his own absence. It was Mersu, therefore, acting as tomb priest for his father while the latter was off on one of his journeys, who had brought the old man's papers up to the tomb to study them out.

Nebesyt, the home of the family as it



FIG. 30. TOMBS ON THE HILLSIDE AS SEEN FROM THE TEMPLE AVENUE AFTER CLEARING. XI DYN.

that he should take ship and journey down to Memphis to supervise them. That Memphis was the locality of one of these estates is evident from the fact that his letter to Ranefer was written by one of the public scribes of Memphis with the profuse greetings, almost word for word, and in a handwriting identical, stroke for stroke, with the letter found in the tomb of Mehenkwetre. Furthermore, another letter shows that the family was in possession of grain from Dedisut, a Memphite suburb. Another estate lay farther up the Nile than Memphis, but still far from Thebes. Now a journey to Memphis was arduous, and Hekanakht's visits to the estates there extended to eighteen months

appears in the address on the letters, presented another temporary difficulty because it was only a small village which had never figured in the inscriptions. Naturally it should be looked for at no greater distance from Thebes than would be convenient for a priest to go and come from the tomb. In fact it appears to have been only some ten or fifteen miles away, between Gebelein and Razigat, at the bend in the river which was infested with crocodiles in ancient times and where the religion of the riverside peasants was largely directed to the propitiation of the crocodile-god Sebek. Hence we run across villages near Nebesyt called Iusebeku and Sunusebeku—the "Island" and the "Stronghold of the

Sacred Crocodiles" and people of the neighborhood called Sisebek and Wejsebek, Perhaa, Khepeshyt, and Sepatmat were other villages in the plain nearby where the family rented land and stored their crops.

Hekanakht, then, was in the habit of going down to Memphis and leaving his eldest son in charge of the household in Nebesyt. Before the first of his trips of

harvest season between March 16 and July 13, but as the Egyptian calendar had no leap years the calendar's seasons came around one day earlier every fourth year, until in the reign of Mentuhotep V the Shômu had come in the autumn. For us, therefore, the date would be October 10, 2004 B. C.

Below the date follow the heading,

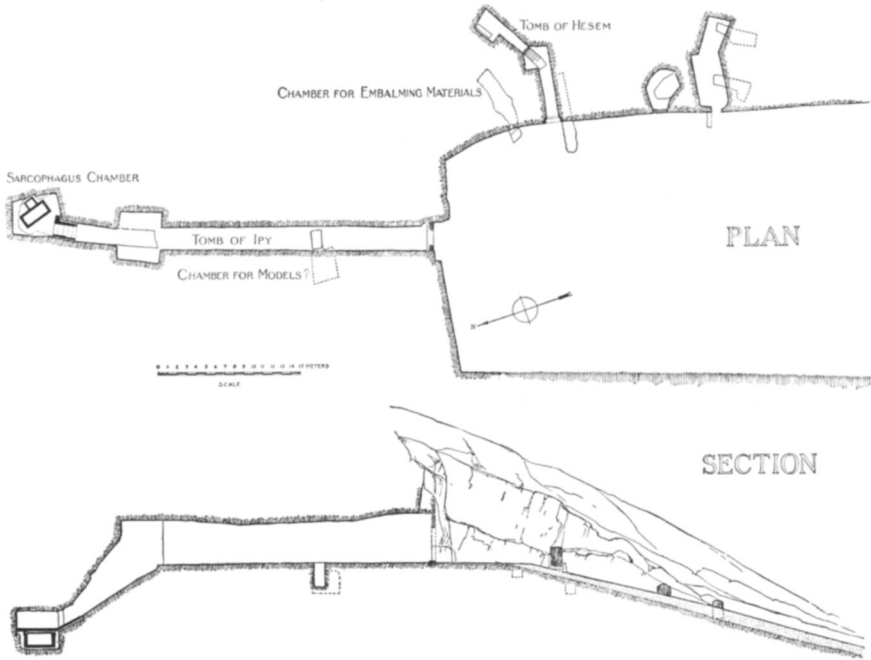


FIG. 31. TOMB OF IPY IN THE DEIR EL BAHRI CLIFFS. XI DYN.

which we know, he calls in Mersu, two other grown sons, and his confidential man, Heti, son of Nakht, and spreading a large sheet of papyrus across his knee he begins to take stock of his affairs (fig. 39). He starts out: "5th Year of the Reign, 2d Month of Shômu, 9th Day." To Hekanakht, writing a date that way was as natural as writing "10/10/22" would be to us, but it was only from finding this account in the sealed tomb that we could guess that the reign of Mentuhotep III or, more likely, Mentuhotep V was meant. Until this was settled, "Shômu" signified little to us. In theory the Shômu was the

"Statement of Hekanakht's barley" and the sub-headings, "Made over by him to his son Mersu," "Fodder for the Bulls," and "The barley that Hekanakht has obtained for his dependents," all duly itemized with spelt (which was only worth two thirds as much as barley) written in red to prevent mistakes in addition. Next comes a "Statement of bulls that Hekanakht has made over to his son Sinebnut" with thirty-five head of cattle listed under five breeds, and a note: "But if Sinebnut appeals to me about any bull that is missing . . . half the loss shall be upon him and Heti son of Nakht." Evidently when the old

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fellow set his house in order every eventuality was provided for. Finally comes a "Statement of bread given to Mersu son of Hekanakht" of three different kinds giving a grand total of 7000 loaves. Seven thousand loaves of bread would have seemed to me an immoderately large baking if I had not been acquainted with Hekanakht's descendants of today. Many of them bake only every other month little

leaving for Memphis in May or June. The crops have been harvested and 551½ bushels of barley and spelt are left with Mersu or stored with some thirteen other people in the neighborhood, but it is still too early for the grain to have been milled and baked into loaves. The cattle are not listed on this sheet—but the letters refer to them—and there is added to the cares of the family a grove of trees from which timber is to be



FIG. 32. CLEARING THE TOMB OF IPY WITH THE LITTLE TOMB OF HESEM IN THE BACKGROUND

biscuits that will keep indefinitely but that are so stony hard that they must be soaked in soup before the toughest jaws can crack them.

Let us hope that Mersu was faithful in his stewardship and that Sinebnut did not have to "appeal about any bull that was missing." In any case we do not know what befell the family on that first trip of old Hekanakht's. We have the account simply because Mersu preserved it and when his father was preparing for a second trip in the Eighth Year, the old scroll was brought out again and the economical old man found plenty of room to write out another inventory on it. This time he is

sold. When all was in order the old fellow set sail for Memphis and Dedisut.

Hekanakht's first letter was written just after he had returned from Dedisut to his other Memphite estates—"when I came hither southwards." It was still summertime, for he wanted Mersu to send "five bushels of wheat and what thou canst find in barley and also the surplus of your victuals until you get to the Shômu," which began on September 2. In fact he probably wrote it about the first of August, for the inundation was still not high enough to predict its eventual quality, and the letter contains instructions in case "it turns out to be a good Nile." The Nile, in fact, had



just begun to rise and Mersu, in the midst of cultivating his summer crops, had written that he feared his dykes might not hold and that the waters might burst over his fields before he could reap them. The old man, too indignant to waste time on the greetings which were half the zest of letter writing to an Egyptian, dashes off his reply:

"The Ka-servant Hekanakht addresses Mersu:

"As to any flooding on our land, it is thou who art cultivating it. Woe to all my people with thee! I shall hold thee re-

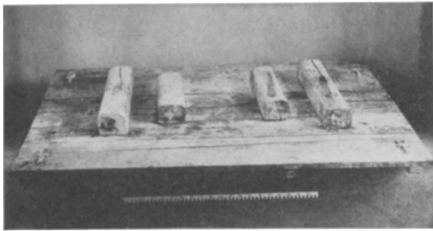


FIG. 33. WOODEN PLATFORM ON WHICH IPY WAS EMBALMED

sponsible for it. Be very active in cultivating, and be very careful. Guard the produce of my grain—guard everything of mine, for I shall hold thee responsible for it." Half-way through the letter some association of ideas again calls to his mind this possibility of losing a crop and again he bursts forth, "and if my land floods when Sneferu cultivates with thee and Anûpu—woe to thee and Sihathor!" (fig. 40).

To his other messages we shall return shortly. In the meantime it is worth noting that the next letter of Hekanakht's which we have was written almost a year later, during which time he remained on one or the other of his northern estates. Naturally the hectoring old man wrote often during this long absence to his household in Nebesyt telling them what he wanted done about this or that at home. He refers to a letter written on New Year's Day about offerings "for a first-of-the-month feast to the God Khentekhtay of the Temple of the Double Portal" and to two letters about his boy Anûpu, but these Mersu did not carry up to the tomb. It was a letter written early in the following

summer, about July 1, which Mersu next saved. The Nile of the past winter had turned out to be so direfully low that the fields were parched, the crops had failed, and with last year's stores of food now exhausted, famine was stalking after the disastrous harvest. Old Hekanakht is in a different mood this time, and he does not forget to write those salutations with which a letter should begin:

"The son speaks to his mother; the Ka-servant Hekanakht to his mother Ipy, and to Heteptet: How are you in your life, safety, and health, by the blessings of the God Montu, Lord of Thebes?

"To the whole household: How are you? How are you in your life, safety, and health? Do not worry about me; I am alive and well.

"Behold, you are as one who eats until he sates hunger, until he shuts his eyes, while the entire land is dead with famine.

"I have come hither southwards, and I have obtained your victuals as well as possible. Is the Nile not very low? Well behold, we have obtained victuals in proportion to it. Be patient you who are named, for you see I have been able to support you up to today." Then he inserts a list of the family and the share due each from the rations he is sending, and continues:

"Now you must not be angry about this. See the whole household as well as the children are dependent on me and everything is mine. 'Half-life is better than dying altogether,' and they say 'the hungry must hunger.' Why, they have begun to eat men and women here! There are none anywhere else to whom such victuals are given.

"You must keep yourself going until I reach you. I shall spend the Shômu here"—in other words, until the thirtieth of next December. His more particular instructions in the same letter he begins: "The Ka-servant Hekanakht addresses Mersu and Heti, son of Nakht, together:

"You must give these victuals to my people only while they are doing work. Mind this! Make the most of all my land; strive to the uttermost; dig the ground with your noses in the work. See if you are

industrious one will praise God for you. Lucky that I can support you.

"And any one of the women or men who may spurn the victuals, let him come to me here and stay with me and live as I live—not that there is anyone who will come hither to me!"

The management of the farms in Nebesyt and the neighborhood takes up a good share of what follows in both of these letters. One might hazard a pretty shrewd guess on which of these transactions Mersu was engaged when he carried his sheaf of papers

shall credit another, extra  $2\frac{1}{2}$  bushels of barley to his family on the first of the month. See, if thou disobeyest this I shall make it up from thee by deduction. And as to what I have told thee—'give him 5 bushels of barley per month'—thou must give him only 4 bushels of barley per month; mind this!"

As it turned out, Hau had no land to rent but Ranefer had a field adjoining Hau's which Sinebnut and Heti procured. Besides this Mersu had entered into several other transactions in Perhaa of which he

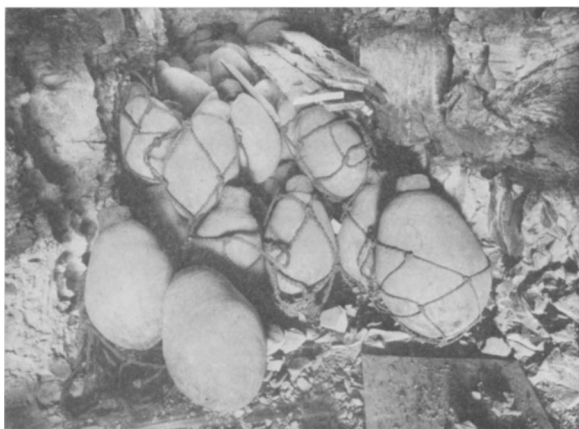


FIG. 34. THE CHAMBER THAT CONTAINED IPY'S EMBALMING MATERIALS AND THE EMBALMER'S PLATFORM

to the tomb. Instructions for undertaking it come in the first letter:

"Have Heti son of Nakht go down at once with Sinebnut to Perhaa to cultivate two fields of land on lease. They will take its rental from the cloth that has been woven here. 'Excellent' thou wilt exclaim about the fabric. Let them get it, and when it has been sold in Nebesyt, let them rent the land with its proceeds. Find land—but do not rush on to just anybody's land. Enquire of Hau the Younger, and if you do not find he has any, then you should follow the advice of Ranefer—it is he who can put you on to the good, well-watered land of Khepeshty.

"And with regard to whatever Heti son of Nakht may do in Perhaa, see I did not credit him with victuals. The allowance for one month is 5 bushels of barley, and I

had drawn up an account. One copy was among the papers which we found and presumably another was forwarded to his father, for some of the grain held in Iusebeku by Ipy the Younger and in Sepatmat by Nehri, son of Ipy, is transferred by Hekanakht to Ranefer, in the third letter. The second letter gives suggestions on closing up the Ranefer business and selling the crop for oil, and with it he sends this third one which Sinebnut and Heti were to have taken to Ranefer, with full instructions for winding up the affair. For some reason it was never delivered and Mersu threw it away all folded and sealed just as he had received it.

It is the letter which Hekanakht had caused to be drawn up by a scribe in Memphis, and as an example of the urbane and polite style of the public letter

writers of the metropolis it is worth quoting in full:

"The Servant of the Estate, the Ka-servant Hekanakht says:

"May thy condition be like that of one who lives a million times! May the God Harishaf, Lord of Heracleopolis, and all the gods that are, aid thee! May the God Ptah south of his Memphite Wall, gladden thy heart as one who lives long! May thy rewards be excellent from Harishaf, Lord of Heracleopolis!

the Younger at Iuseboku; at Sepatmat with Nehri, son of Ipy, are 100 bushels of spelt, and with his brother Desher, 15. Total: 290 bushels of spelt, and  $67\frac{1}{2}$  of barley.

"And he who would give me the equivalent in oil must give me a hebenet-measure for 10 bushels of barley or for 15 of spelt. However I prefer my property to be given me in barley.

"And do not fail to write about Nakht and about everything for which he may come to thee. He looks after all my property."



FIG. 35. COFFIN CHAMBER OF THE TOMB OF HESEM WITH STRAWS FROM THE MAGIC BROOM ON THE FLOOR

"Thy servant says:

"Let thy clerk—to whom be given life, safety, and health—know that I have sent Heti, son of Nakht, and Sinebnut about that barley and spelt at thy place. Also, what thy clerk—life, safety, and health—might do, is to have it withdrawn without allowing the least of it to go astray, if thou wilt be so good, please. And as to the price when it is collected, let it be placed in the house of thy clerk—life, safety, and health—until somebody comes for it. And see, I have had this grain put to the corn measure and measured. It is a neat 100 full sacks.

"And see, 75 bushels of spelt are at Perhaa with Nenneksu;  $67\frac{1}{2}$  of barley with Ipy

Other farm affairs run through both of the first two letters. Timber from the grove of trees on the estate had been disposed of and Sinebnut's allowance in the second letter is to be made up from their sale. Sihathor is renting a piece of land and 5 lbs. of copper is sent him to pay the rent. There is still another leasing business in which Mersu "has made it difficult for me, renting the land as well as sowing it in barley alone." By so doing he has cut into the old man's store of ready barley and is particularly warned against further inroads. Among some general remarks on this point Hekanakht notes that "25 bushels of barley from one acre is not a bad return." On another farm Mersu is instructed to

transact the business in flax. Hekanakht had left the produce of about four acres in flax when he went away in the fifth year, and Mersu had an account on this occasion with a woman named Sitnebsekhem which seems to have included nearly as much flax again.

However, the most appealing part of the letters of Hekanakht to those of us who are

from Dedisut and not giving me the 50 bushels in new barley—by no means! But thou art happy eating the good barley. ‘I am on land and the boat is well moored, but when thou puttest ashore thou doest everything wrong.’ If thou shouldst have sent me old barley to do duty for new—but what am I saying? Much good it is!” In the second letter Mersu is told to watch

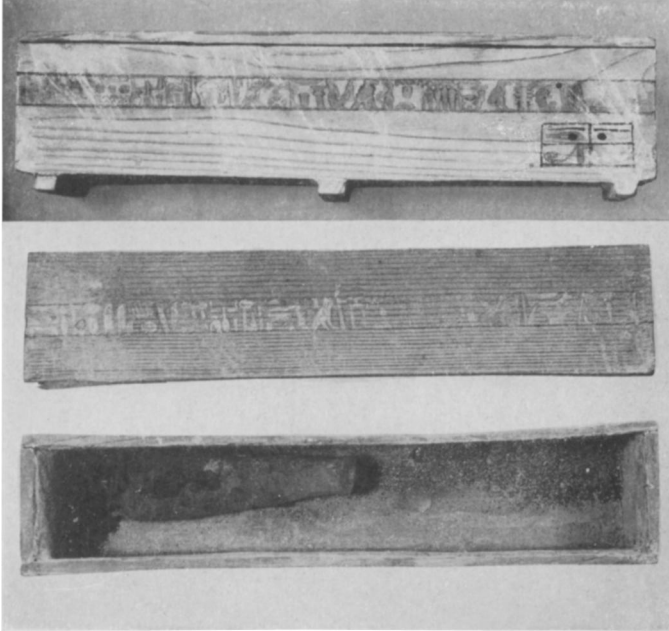


FIG. 36. WAX MAGIC MUMMY AND COFFIN. XI DYN.

not of the land, are the glimpses we get into the life of his family.

So much as has already been quoted of the letters has served to introduce the oldest son Mersu. As his father saw him he was perhaps a little stupid and sometimes complaining, but at least he was dependable, and Hekanakht looks to him to run the complicated affairs of the family and to keep the house in order. Sinebnut and the family's confidential man, Heti son of Nakht, are Mersu's main helpmates, but the third son, Sihathor, we meet with in a less attractive light. In the first letter he had made a suggestion to Mersu which scandalizes old Hekanakht: "As to sending Sihathor to me with old, dried up barley

Sihathor whenever he comes to the house.

The three older brothers and Heti are all married and have families of their own living in the household of Nebesyt, and there are besides women and children in Hekanakht's own harim who bring the number of mouths to be fed up to at least thirty.

There was Ipy, his mother, and her maid, and with his mother Hekanakht greets a poor relation called Hetepet who has with her a little son Mey. Whether Hetepet was interfering or whether she was a bore is not divulged. In any case she was far from popular with Mersu, and Hekanakht is constrained to write, "I have told you, 'do not keep a woman-friend of Hetepet's

away from her, whether a relative of hers or an acquaintance of hers.' Take great care of her, and I hope you will prosper in all things accordingly—although to be sure thou dost not wish her with thee."

In addition to the three married sons there were two boys, Anûpu and Sneferu. Neither one was old enough to be put to work when Hekanakht went away in the



FIG. 37. MAGIC CHARM  
ON THE ARM OF A  
MUMMY. XII DYN.

Fifth Year and therefore they do not appear in a list of rations which he left at that time, but on his second trip to the North, three years later, they are always present in his mind. "Take great care of Anûpu and Sneferu," he writes, "whether thou livest with them or diest with them. Mind this!" To Anûpu, who was the elder of the two and who was already old enough to help Mersu and Sihathor with the summer crops that came so near being flooded, this parental attention by the older brother was a little too much. During the winter he complained to the old man, and Mersu is or-

dered to "give back to him any article of Anûpu's that thou hast, and whatever is missing compensate him for it. Do not make me write to thee about it again. I have already written to thee twice about it."

But the youngest, a spoiled brat, Sneferu, is really his father's favorite. He was still a mere boy and when his father went away no special allowance was given him, but later Hekanakht decides otherwise and writes to Mersu, "See, if Sneferu has no



FIG. 38. LETTER FOLDED  
AND SEALED AS IT  
WAS FOUND

allowance in the house with thee, do not fail to write about it. I have been told that he is discontented. Take great care of him and give him victuals. And salute him from Khentekh a thousand times, a million times. Take great care of him and thou must send him off to me directly after thou hast cultivated." However, traveling with the crotchety old man hardly meets Sneferu's idea of a good time. He plainly refused to go and the next summer we find the old man rather plaintively writing, "And if Sneferu should want to look after the bulls, then put him to look after them, for he doesn't want to be running up and down cultivating with thee nor does he want to come hither with me. Indeed

whatever he wants thou must let him enjoy it." Poor Mersu!

There was a certain Renkaes with a family—perhaps a married and widowed daughter living at home—and three other very small children, including a little girl Nofret, but there is no mother of all these children and the conclusion is that Hekanakht was a widower. Still one would have thought that with that overgrown household of his he had troubles enough. Not at all, he must needs take a concubine to

as a partner. If thou wouldst keep quiet it would be a very good thing."

The East has never changed, and if we jump four thousand years for the cause of this quarrel, I believe we shall find it in the diary of H. E. Ching Shan, written in Pekin under the date of January 31, 1900.

"My son's wife is most undutiful; this evening she had a quarrel with my senior concubine, and the two women almost came to blows. Women are indeed difficult to

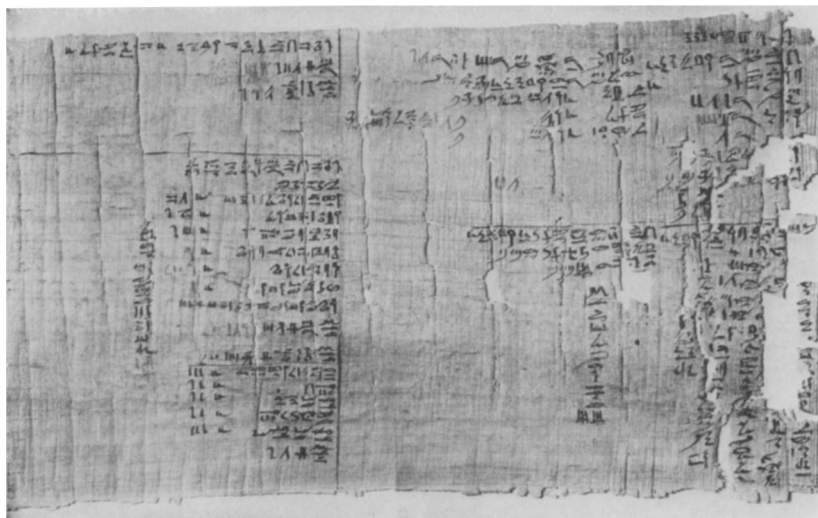


FIG. 39. HEKANAKHT'S INVENTORIES OF HIS PROPERTY IN THE FIFTH AND EIGHTH YEARS

himself, named Iutenhab. The feelings of his family can be pictured clearly enough from the old fellow's irate messages to them:

"And have the housemaid Senen turned out of my house at once, and be very careful every day that Sihathor visits thee. Behold, if Senen spends a single day in the house, thou wilt be to blame if thou lettest her do harm to my concubine. What am I supporting thee for and what can my concubine do to you, you five boys?

"Salute my mother Ipy a thousand times, a million times, and salute Hetepet and the whole household and Nofret. And as to doing any harm to my concubine, take warning! Thou art not associated with me

manage. I am seventy-eight years of age and sore troubled by my family; their misconduct is hard for an old man to bear."<sup>6</sup>

But back again to ancient Egypt. No tirades of Hekanakht's could ever calm the troubled home waters, and the following summer the old man gives way and does what he should have done in the beginning. He writes:

"Thou shalt send me Iutenhab. As this man lives—I speak of our tenant Ip—he who shall interfere in any way with the concubine, he is against me and I am against him. Behold, this is my concubine

<sup>6</sup>Bland and Backhouse, *China under the Empress Dowager*, p. 260.

and it is well known that a man's concubine ought to be treated well. See, there is not any one who would do for her the like of what I have done. Even if none of you would be patient should his wife be denounced to him, let me be patient. But how can I ever live with you in one establishment if you will not respect a concubine for my sake?"

We may be sure that nothing ever came of Hekanakht's insinuation that since Mersu is not a partner in his father's affairs he may be shown the door, or of his threats that he will turn all of his sons out of the establishment. Hekanakht relished far too much the opportunity of reminding them that they were "eating his bread" and that "everything was his and the whole household dependent on him." He was a fussy and hectoring old fellow whose letters were prodigally strewn with "Mind this"; "Be very careful and be very active," and "I shall hold thee responsible for it." "Do not fail to answer about everything I have written thee about," he insists, "for see, this is a year for a man to work for his master"; or again, "this is not a year for a man to be negligent towards his master, or his father, or his brother."

Mersu may well have heaved a great sigh when Iuténhab was sent off and the old man wrote that he would be away another six months, but the writer, for one, hates to say good-bye to old Hekanakht and his lady—with all of their faults.

During the year all of the members of the Museum's Expedition who were in Egypt took some part in the dig at Luxor. The writer and Walter Hauser were in charge of the excavations, the latter in addition making all of the plans. On this job he had the help of Mr. Hall for a few of the early weeks of the winter. The photography was done by Mr. Burton. Between laboring with his cameras and his mirrors in the bowels of the earth among the tombs of King Seti and of Queen Nofretari, and then climbing the cliffs to perch his tripod precariously on the edge of some overhanging crag to get bird's-eye views of the work, he led a varied and busy life. The paying and the doctoring of the men, the accounting, the packing of antiquities, and all of the odd jobs that a digging camp is so fertile in, fell to the share of Mr. Nixon whenever he came to us from Lisht. Twice during the winter, and each time when we were at our busiest, Mr. Mace, too, came up from Lisht and gave us a hand. I have already mentioned—but only in passing—the help given us by Mr. Gunn. To every Egyptologist he is well known as one of those rare beings—an authority on hieratic, especially of the period in which we were interested. His help went far beyond the Hekanakht Papers and everywhere in the foregoing pages where reference is made to graffiti or inscriptions our acknowledgments are due to him.

H. E. WINLOCK.



FIG. 40. THE FIRST PAGE OF HEKANAKHT'S FIRST LETTER TO HIS HOUSEHOLD IN NEBESYT